

The background of the slide is a photograph of several graduates in black and red caps and gowns, smiling. The image is slightly faded to allow the text to be prominent.

Student Opportunity Act Update: Aligning the Requirements of the State Mandated Plan with the District's Long Term Strategic Priorities

Equity. Excellence. Empowerment.

March 18, 2020





We have extraordinary students and there are great things happening in all of our schools, but not all children are benefiting from the full range of opportunities in LPS.

With our current improvement trajectory, if nothing changes, it will take almost 40 years before we reach a point where every child is achieving at or above grade level expectations.



Agenda

1. Overview of the Student Opportunity Act
2. Core Beliefs and Fundamental Commitments
3. Review of LPS' Long-Term Strategic Priorities
4. Alignment of Priorities and Allowable SOA Expenditures
5. SOA-Approved Program Areas and Resource Needs
6. Remaining Budget Considerations
7. Next Steps for SOA Plan Submission to DESE in April



The Student Opportunity Act Changed How Chapter 70 Funds are Allocated to Districts

- Governor Baker signed the Student Opportunity Act (SOA) into law on November 26, 2019, increasing the overall state aid to school districts and directing more money to districts that serve higher need populations
- The increase in Chapter 70 aid provided to districts as a result of SOA functions the same as any other **increase in operating revenue** and **must account for the increased operating expenses** that districts experience each year
 - In FY21, **LPS will receive \$12.7 million**, approximately \$800 per student, through the first year of SOA rollout, a similar increase to what LPS received in FY20 Chapter 70 aid prior to SOA
 - At the same time, LPS will experience an **increase in fixed costs of \$6.5 million** due to embedded step increases in collective bargaining agreements and increases in healthcare premiums, leaving **a difference of \$6.2 million** or approximately **\$400 per student** for strategic investments in the classroom

Every Decision We Make is Guided by Our Core Beliefs & Fundamental Commitments

Core Beliefs

1. A high-quality education is a **fundamental civil right** of every child we serve.
2. Teaching and Learning are at the **core of our work**. Everything we do must support what happens in the classroom.
3. Families are our partners. They are our students' **first teachers in the home**.
4. There is no silver bullet to improving our schools. Sustainable school improvement requires **hard and steady work over time**.
5. Every adult in the system is accountable for the success of our students. Putting every child on a path to college or career success is the **responsibility of the entire community**.

Fundamental Commitments

1. **Eliminate** the racial, ethnic and linguistic **achievement and opportunity gaps** among all students.
2. Provide **equitable funding and resources** among the district's diverse schools.
3. **Engage all families** with courtesy, dignity, respect and cultural understanding.



The LPS Budget is a Funding Plan for the District's Overarching Educational Plan

Based on eight months of listening to and learning from stakeholders across the community, four strategic priorities for long-term improvement have emerged and continue to be validated by the data:

1. Increase access to early learning opportunities for children from birth to age 5 through a coordination of services with community partners to ensure that every child in Lowell is academically, emotionally and socially prepared for Kindergarten.
2. Increase access for all students to high performing seats through the continuous improvement of all schools, the expansion of high demand programs, and an intensive focus on turning around historically underperforming schools.
3. Align secondary school curriculum and programs for all students with post-secondary opportunities so that they are college, career, and life ready upon graduation.
4. Leverage the rich diversity that defines the Lowell community through a fundamental commitment to equity so that all students access the full benefits of growing up in a truly global community.



The Student Opportunity Act Requires Districts to Provide DESE with a Full Accounting of the Planned Use of Additional Chapter 70 Revenue by April 1

[District Name]

Student Opportunity Plan: SY 2021-2023

→ Commitment 1: Focusing on Student Subgroups

Which student subgroups will require focused support to ensure all students achieve at high levels in school and are successfully prepared for life?

[Insert text here]

→ Commitment 2: Using Evidence-Based Programs to Close Gaps

What evidence-based programs will your district adopt, deepen, or continue to best support the closure of achievement and opportunity gaps? What resources will you allocate to these programs?

[Insert text here]

→ Commitment 3: Monitoring Success with Outcome Metrics and Targets

What metrics will your district use to monitor success in reducing disparities in achievement among student subgroups? Select from the list of DESE metrics or provide your own. *(Please note that targets will be added to this section once SY 2020 data is released this fall.)*

1) DESE outcome metrics:

- ✓ [Insert metrics]
- ✓
- ✓

2) Custom district metrics:

✓

→ Commitment 4: Engaging All Families

How will your district ensure that all families, particularly those representing the student subgroups most in need of support, have the opportunity to meaningfully engage with the district regarding their students' needs?

[Insert text here]

DESE encouraged districts to commit to a small number of high-impact, evidence-based programs to close opportunity and achievement gaps among student subgroups. A completed Student Opportunity Plan should **not** look and feel like a comprehensive strategic plan. The Student Opportunity Plan is a chance to highlight the most critical initiatives underway and deepen them or add a few new programs that will best support student needs. Long form districts are encouraged to focus primarily on how they will spend incremental Chapter 70 funds to adopt new evidence-based programs or deepen current efforts. **However, long form districts not expecting to receive significant new funds can focus their narratives more on current programs underway that are focused on improving outcomes among student subgroups.**

The Student Opportunity Act within the LPS Context

- In the past, it may be more straightforward to determine how funding would translate to school-based resources due to the prior centrally-controlled decision-making model.
- However, beginning with FY 21, LPS is moving to **site-based budgeting** in which more of the decision-making has shifted to the schools through **collaborative processes** that include newly reconstituted site school councils.
- In doing so, LPS is ensuring the **staff and families have a voice** in identifying each school community's budgetary priorities while **maintaining the oversight** and checks necessary to ensure accountability and **systemic alignment**.
- Through allocation of pooled funds based on total number of students and individual student needs, **educators working directly with students**, are able to determine the optimal supports for their building community.

The List of Allowable Expenditures Provided by DESE Under SOA Align with Our Long-Term Strategic Priorities

Enhanced Core Instruction

1. Expanded access to full-day, high-quality pre-kindergarten for 4-year-olds, including potential collaboration with other local providers
2. Research-based early literacy programs in pre-kindergarten and early elementary grades
3. Early College programs focused primarily on students underrepresented in higher education
4. Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum
5. Expanded access to career-technical education, including "After Dark" district-vocational partnerships and innovation pathways reflecting local labor market priorities (I)

Targeted Student Supports

6. Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs
7. Inclusion/co-teaching for students with disabilities and English learners
8. Acceleration Academies and/or summer learning to support skill development and accelerate advanced learners
9. Dropout prevention and recovery programs

Talent Development

10. Diversifying the educator/administrator workforce through recruitment and retention
11. Leadership pipeline development programs for schools
12. Increased staffing to expand student access to arts, athletics, and enrichment, and strategic scheduling to enable common planning time for teachers
13. Strategies to recruit and retain educators/administrators in hard-to-staff schools and positions

Conditions for Student Success

14. Community partnerships for in-school enrichment and wraparound services
15. Parent-teacher home visiting programs
16. Labor-management partnerships to improve student performance
17. Facilities improvements to create healthy and safe school environments

SOA Allowable Program Area: Enhanced Core Instruction

{Aligned LPS Strategic Priorities: Increase Access to High Performing Seats; Align Secondary Programming with Post-Secondary Opportunities}

Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum

TOTAL RESOURCE NEED: \$7,900,000



SOA Allowable Program Area of Focus: Enhanced Core Instruction

Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum

- LPS current enrollment 15,368
- 57.7% of LPS students economically disadvantaged
- 24% of LPS students are English Learners
- 31.3% of LPS students speak a language other than English in the home.
- 74% of LPS students are designated as “High Needs” by the DESE.



Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum

LPS must make a significant investment in SOA funds to support rising personnel costs to provide the best learning environment for our children.

- One teacher for every 25 students in elementary schools
- One teacher for every 30 students in middle schools
- Every elementary school with 400 students funded for a Literacy Specialist
- Every middle school with 500 students funded for an Instructional Specialist
- Leveling caseloads for equity

FY21 Cost to Maintain Current Class Sizes and Caseloads at Each School = \$6,500,000

Supporting educators to implement high-quality, aligned curriculum

LPS must make a significant investment in SOA funds to increase technology hardware to move toward achieving a 1:1 student to device ratio.

- 1-to-1 student to device ratio will decrease inequities among students and schools.
- Students device use improves the writing process, expanding the genres and formats
- Student-centered, individualized, and project-based learning increases engagement
- Student-teacher communications often increases.

FY 21 cost for 4,600 additional student devices and required accompanying software to improve the current ratios to 1:1 for grades 4-12 and 1:2 for grades K-3 = \$1,400,000

SOA Allowable Program Area: Early Learning

{Aligned LPS Strategic Priority: Expand Access to Early Learning, from Birth to Age 5}

Expanded access to full-day, high-quality pre-kindergarten for 4-year-olds, (including potential collaboration with other local providers) alongside robust research-based early literacy programs in pre-kindergarten and early elementary grades.

TOTAL RESOURCE NEED: \$3,600,000



SOA Allowable Program Area: Early Learning

Expanded access to full-day, high-quality pre-kindergarten for 4-year-olds, (including potential collaboration with other local providers) alongside robust research-based early literacy programs in pre-kindergarten and early elementary grades.

- *Research demonstrates that students who attend high-quality preschool programming enter kindergarten with greater pre-reading skills, larger vocabularies, and stronger math skills than those students who do not attend a high-quality preschool program.*

LPS currently serves 504 four year-olds and 141 three year-olds. LPS strives to provide high quality programming opportunities for all four year-olds in Lowell.



Expanded access to full-day, high-quality pre-kindergarten for 4-year-olds alongside a research-based early literacy programs in pre-kindergarten and early elementary grades

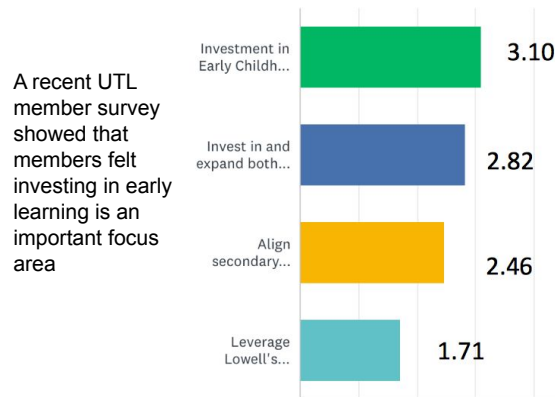
Current District Investment:

- Cardinal O'Connell Early Learning Center
- Every 12 Pre-K students will get a half day Pre-K teacher
- Every 24 Pre-K students will get 1 Pre-K teacher
- Every Pre-K classroom will get 1 para

Additional Resources:

LPS has recently allocated funds to launch a feasibility study on Pre-K expansion. We will be mapping the current programming within LPS, the community, and with our community partners to identify gaps in access as well as areas of opportunity for expansion.

Anticipated FY21 cost to add 400 full day preschool seats to the current partial day offerings to ensure that all 4 year-olds within our community have access to early learning opportunities = ~\$3,600,000.



SOA Allowable Program Area: Targeted Student Supports

{Aligned LPS Strategic Priority: Increase Access to High Performing Seats}

Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs

TOTAL RESOURCE NEED: \$2,800,000



SOA Allowable Program Area of Focus: Targeted Student Supports

Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs

The Renaissance Network is the strategic grouping of our chronically underperforming schools.

All of the schools have created a DESE turnaround plan and are in the implementation stages.

LPS is working to differentiate supports to these schools based on readiness and accountability percentiles



Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs

- LPS has identified 7 schools in need of targeted interventions for subgroups
 - 4 middle schools (Sullivan, Robinson, Butler, Stoklosa)
 - one pre k- 8 (Bartlett)
 - one elementary (Greenhalge)
 - Lowell High School
- Students at these schools are performing at lower levels than at other similar schools in the district, with average scores for all subgroups more than 10 points lower than other schools in the city.

LPS recognizes that seven of our schools require additional time, attention, support and services to dramatically change their trajectory and course of action. LPS is setting the stage for long-term improvement by focusing on academics and student achievement at every school site and investing in targeted and intensive support for chronically underperforming schools.

The Robinson School was the only school of these seven to receive significant financial support from the state, receiving more than \$300,000 each year for the current fiscal year as well as FY21 and FY22.

The FY21 cost to provide the Sullivan, Butler, Stoklosa, Bartlett, Greenhalge and LHS with a similar additional supplement to their school-based budgets as the Robinson, enabling each Renaissance school to have similar access to additional administrative and social emotional learning supports and increased time for professional development = \$1,800,000



SOA Allowable Program Area of Focus: Targeted Student Supports

*Increased personnel and
services to support holistic
student needs*

- SEL/School Climate Support
- PBIS
- First Step/Open Circle Curriculum
- Restorative Justice
- Help Zones



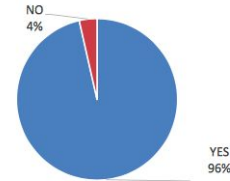
Increased personnel and services to support holistic student needs

In-school alternative programming at each comprehensive K-8, middle and high school

- Social Emotional Curriculum across schools
- Restorative Justice Model
- Help Zone to provide staff and students in need with social emotional supports.

Based on a recent UTL member survey, 95% of members believe SEL services are extremely important for the success of the school.

Q22: Would a lack of social-emotional services and supports be a critical factor in addressing the social-emotional health of our students, especially those students who are in crisis?



FY21 cost to add within school alternative programs to nine schools, including an additional full-time teacher and paraprofessional to provide support for at-risk students at every traditional school serving grades 5-12 = \$1,000,000



Commitment 3: Monitoring Success with Outcome Metrics and Targets

DESE outcome metrics:

- ELA achievement

- Mathematics achievement

- ELA mean SGP

- Mathematics mean SGP

- Dropout rates

- Graduation rates



District metrics:

- Student engagement survey (MCIEA)

- Family satisfaction survey (MCIEA)

- iReady results

- Average Daily Attendance rates

Commitment 4: Engaging All Families

- An LPS core belief is that *families are our partners*.
- LPS has convened a Superintendent's Steering Committee that is comprised of representatives from a host of internal and external stakeholders who will serve 6-month or 12-month terms and meet with the superintendent and leadership team on a monthly basis to vet ideas and initiatives as a sounding board meant to emphasize inclusivity in the district's decision-making processes.
- LPS has focused on the revitalization of School Site Councils at each of our school sites.
- School site councils will advise school based administration on school initiatives such as the fair student funding allocations, curriculum, and school-based budget.
- LPS has hired new district-based Bilingual Parent Liaisons to complement existing staff to provide translations in Khmer, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, and Swahili to allow for better access for all families.
- Lowell has been recently accepted into the MA DESE's cohort of districts to be trained in the research-based ***Parent Institute for Quality Education*** (PIQE) model. Lowell staff will be trained in the model in May 2020 and LPS anticipate launching parent series at a number of schools this fall.

Commitment 4: Engaging All Families (and All Stakeholders)

- Through the strategic planning process, 20 of 28 schools were visited for facilitated conversations around the developing strategic plan in order to obtain feedback from educators on the strategic priorities and to incorporate input from frontline LPS educators on those priorities.
- Remaining eight schools were scheduled in the final weeks of March and will have the opportunity to participate (at least) electronically along with all other LPS staff during the state-mandated closure with data from surveys and questionnaire data being obtained prior to the conclusion of the closure.
- Over 100 individual meetings and listening sessions with employees, community members, and non-profit leaders.
- 100+ visits to schools, including visits to more than 100 classroom visits by the superintendent in the first 100 days of SY 19-20.

Remaining Budget Considerations

- In FY21, **LPS will receive \$12.7 million**, approximately \$800 per student, through the first year of SOA rollout.
- This increase in Chapter 70 aid functions the same as any other **increase in operating revenue** and **must account for the increased operating expenses** that districts experience each year.
- LPS will experience an **increase in fixed costs of \$6.5 million** due to embedded step increases in collective bargaining agreements and increases in healthcare premiums - **an expense which will be met without any associated cuts to school budgets, ensuring that class sizes and caseloads can be maintained at all schools.**
- The remaining ***\$6.2 million***, or approximately ***\$400 per student***, can be used for strategic investments in the classroom.
- Based on a review of data and the priorities we have gathered from internal and external stakeholders, there is an **additional immediate need for resources within schools of \$7.8 million**, as outlined within the current preliminary draft SOA plan.

Remaining Budget Considerations (cont.)

- To maximize the use of the remaining \$6.2 million, **an additional \$2 million has been provided directly to schools through Fair Student Funding** to empower principals, teachers and parents at each school site to play a greater role in tailoring their schools' budgets and the resources within their schools to meet the needs of students.
- With the remaining \$4.2 million, following school-based decisions, we anticipate there will be \$5.8 million of additional prioritized resource needs in order to fully meet the current year 1 goals within the draft SOA plan. Thus, as anticipated, additional decisions will need to be made regarding district priorities ahead of our full budget proposal.
- A full balancing of the budget (i.e. revenue to expenses) will be completed in alignment with our full strategic planning process which we expect to complete in April with a draft budget presented to the SC in May.
- **Important note: none of the cost estimates presented within the current preliminary draft SOA plan account for or include any increased salary costs that may result from collective bargaining** (***there would be an additional cost of approx. \$1.3 million to the FY21 budget for every 1% of salary increase*)



Next Steps to Finalize the SOA Plan

Public presentation March 19, 2020 at the Stoklosa School 5:30 p.m.

Preliminary plan submission April 1, 2020

Strategic plan development

School site budget submissions

CBAs to be negotiated with our 3 unions which will impact the budget moving forward.

Amendment to SOA as needed

